

## GLORIOUS YEARS: FRENCH CALENDARS FROM LOUIS XIV TO THE REVOLUTION

‘Almanac: a calendar containing all of the days of the year, holidays, the lunar cycle, the signs of the zodiac, and weather forecasts.’ (*Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, 1694)

The almanacs, or calendars, in this exhibition, were published in Paris in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, from the reign of Louis XIV to the Revolution. Designed to inform and entertain the public, while glorifying the king, they depict major events, from royal weddings, and births to battles and peace treaties. Louis XIV (1643-1715) used the arts to shape and promote his image, and it was during his reign that almanacs reached their apogee. Around 10 different large-scale calendars were published every year. They were produced and sold by private publishers, but the choice of subject matter and use of complex allegory suggests direct involvement from the royal court. The quality and popularity of the almanacs declined during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the French Revolution of 1789 led to a revival. The Republican Calendar was introduced in 1793, with new months, weeks and days. Calendars were essential tools for establishing this new conception of time and Revolutionary principals.

Almanacs were created at speed, involving a team of artists, specialised engravers, poets, printers, and publishers. Printed in the thousands, they were relatively cheap and available to the middle classes. A calendar is essential for everyday life. It is a visual representation of the year, allows future planning, and is a record of events and a memory of the past. But despite their popularity, not many of these almanacs survive today. They were hung on walls and replaced annually, and were not designed to last. These rare prints are both works of art and important historic documents, revealing much about the social, political and artistic world of the Old Regime and its collapse.

Curator: Rachel Jacobs

Location: Drawings Rooms, Waddesdon Manor

Dates: 22 March -29 October 2017



Jean Le Pautre (1618-82)

*Almanac for the Year 1656 (The Triumphal King)*

Published by Gérard Jollain (d.1683), Paris

Etching, engraving and letterpress on paper

This almanac, the earliest on display, was produced at the very beginning of Louis XIV's reign, only two years after his coronation. Unlike the others, the calendar is the main feature of the print.

It is signed by the designer and engraver Jean Le Pautre, with a reference to his royal privilege: 'Le Pautre Fecit / Cum privilegio'. Before modern copyright law, a royal privilege could be purchased by publishers to try to protect their prints from being copied. The procedure could be lengthy and expensive, often did not work and was therefore not always worthwhile.

Jean Le Pautre also engraved the three official prints of Louis XIV's coronation and later became a member of the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* when engravers were admitted.

Accession number 2669.3.4



*Almanac for the Year 1671 (The Royal Concert of the Muses)*

Published by Marguerite Van der Mael (la Veuve Moncornet), (active 1668-d.1691), Paris  
Engraving, etching and letterpress on paper

This almanac celebrates the flourishing of the arts and sciences under Louis XIV. The king appears as Apollo, seated on mount Parnassus with his queen standing beside him. The royal couple holds a scroll listing the seven Liberal Arts: Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Music, Geometry, Arithmetic and Astronomy. They are personified by seven female figures who also represent Apollo's muses. The two figures on either side of the calendar are land and water, emphasising the extent of the king's rule. The power of the king is articulated through this layering of mythology, allegory and meaning.

Louis XIV became associated with Apollo, Greek and Roman god of the sun, light, music, poetry, truth, prophecy and healing, from an early age. The King, who ruled as an absolute monarch, used the images and attributes of Apollo, the sun-god to turn himself into the all-powerful 'Sun-King'.

Accession number 2669.3.9



Nicolas de Larmessin II (c. 1638-94)  
*Almanac for the Year 1672 (The Royal March)*  
Published by Pierre Bertrand (c. 1600 – c. 1678), Paris,  
Etching, engraving and letterpress on paper

Louis XIV, the Dauphin (heir to the throne) and the royal princes, are among the figures on horseback looking out at the viewer. The king gestures towards his troops, presenting us with an intimidating display of France's military might. The text reinforces the visual message by praising the valour and renown of the French army, which inspires 'admiration, terror and fear in the hearts of all the nations on earth.'

The creation of large and complex almanacs involved multiple artists, designers, engravers, printers, and even poets, who in most cases remained anonymous, except for the publisher, whose name is printed along the bottom. The publisher was responsible for managing and financing their production and sale. This is a rare example where the engraver has signed his name – 'De Larmessin Sculpebat' (Nicolas de Larmessin II) in the bottom left-hand corner.

Accession number 2669.4.1



*Almanac for the Year 1680 (The Effects of the Sun)*

Published by Marguerite Van der Mael (la Veuve Moncornet), (active 1668-d.1691), Paris  
Etching, engraving and letterpress on paper

Holland, France, Spain, Denmark and Germany celebrate their newly-agreed peace, following the treaties of Nijmegen (1678-79), ending the Franco-Dutch War of 1672-78 in which France emerged as the most powerful nation in Europe. France's victory and central role in the negotiations of the treaty, as depicted in this almanac, inspires a sense of national pride, while also sending a clear message to the rest of Europe with the words; 'The sun has made the peace'.

The publisher of this print is a woman, Marguerite Van der Mael, who took over her husband's business after his death. Women were often involved in the management and book-keeping side of the publishing business and therefore were well-placed to carry it on, often remarrying within the trade or eventually passing on the business to their children.

Accession number 2669.4.2





*Almanac for the Year 1683 (The Universal Festivities)*

Published by Pierre Landry (c.1630-1701), Paris

Etching, engraving and letterpress on paper

This almanac celebrates the birth of the Duke of Bourgogne, grandson of the king. The female figure in the foreground is writing the event into the book of History while the others hold prints depicting the celebrations held throughout Europe to mark the royal birth. Images were essential in communicating the message that the Bourbon dynasty – still relatively young and recently threatened by civil war – was here to stay. The sheet celebrates both the continuity of Louis XIV's line and illustrates the power of print.

Accession number 2669.4.3



Franz Ertinger (1640-c. 1710)

*Almanac for the Year 1688 (The Catholic Faith Triumphant)*

Published by Pierre Landry (c. 1630 – 1701), Paris

Etching, engraving and letterpress on paper

The almanac celebrates the Catholic King James II of England and Ireland. His battles with the English parliament and attempts to create religious liberties for English Catholics and Protestant non-conformists, led to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. He was forced from the throne and replaced by his daughter Mary II and William III.

The almanac illustrates key events from the previous year alongside a calendar of the present year - caught somewhere between the past, present and future. Ironically, although it celebrates the triumph of the Catholic faith under James II, viewers would have been aware of the unfolding defeat of the king and Catholicism in England.

Accession number 2669.4.6



Two leather portfolios inscribed '*Calendriers*', c 1883 –c 95  
Possibly manufactured by Damascène Morgand (1840-98). Paris

Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839-98), who built Waddesdon Manor, collected over 70 almanacs in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The almanacs were mounted on boards watermarked 1883, suggesting Ferdinand probably collected them around this time. He stored them in these leather portfolios, titled '*Calendriers*' (calendars). They were kept in his private sitting room, the Tower Drawing Room, on the ground floor, pictured in the image below, just behind the folding screen.



In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several books dedicated to the study of almanacs and printed ephemera were published, and there were significant sales and specialised dealers. Ferdinand was collecting this material at an exciting time when it was becoming the focus of scholarly study and valued for its historical and artistic merit.

Ferdinand also collected smaller designs and printed almanacs that were pasted into bound albums. His collecting of ephemera extended to printed board games, trade cards, bookplates, playbills, membership tickets, and prints from the French Revolution. His interest in the everyday experience of the Old Regime is apparent in his own writings as an amateur historian and collector.

Accession numbers 2669.3 and 2669.4





*Almanac for the Year 1691 (Victory near the Abbey of Staffarda)*

Published by François Gérard Jollain (1660-1735), Paris

Etching, engraving and letterpress on paper

The Battle of Staffarda, fought on 18 August 1690 in Piedmont-Savoy, in northern Italy, was part of the Nine Years' War, in which Louis XIV attempted to extend his borders, fighting a coalition of Austria, the Dutch Republic, Spain, Britain and Savoy.

This almanac combines multiple types of image, including a battle scene with a portrait of the victorious commander, a map, fortifications and cityscapes. Each of these elements required specialised artists and engravers. The initial production costs for such a large and complex print would have been high, and yet these prints were sold relatively cheaply because of the high numbers of impressions printed (around 2,000). A publisher would never have risked printing in such high numbers without being sure of the market.

Accession number 2669.4.9



*Almanac for the Year 1701 (The King Declares the Duke of Anjou as the King of Spain)*  
Published by François Landry (c. 1668-1720) and Gabrielle Landry (c. 1670-c. 1740), Paris  
Etching, engraving and letterpress on paper

The central scene illustrates the moment when Louis XIV declared his grandson, the Duke of Anjou, as Philip V, King of Spain. The Spanish ambassador kneels before the new king and kisses his hand. This controversial union of France and Spain provoked the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-15), in which France's dominance was challenged by the Grand Alliance of England, the Dutch Republic, Austria and the Holy Roman Empire, all of whom supported the competing Hapsburg claim to the Spanish throne.

The scene is elegantly played out in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, with the members of the royal family individually portrayed and luxuriously dressed. There is artistic invention with the addition of the exiled king James II, who was not actually present at the time. The extra monarch was intended to add weight to the Bourbon claim to the Spanish throne.

Accession number 2669.4.13



*Office Almanac for the Years from 1600 to 1750, 1714, Paris*  
 Published by Le Febvre (active c 1714), Paris  
 Engraving and etching on paper

An engineer of mathematical instruments invented this almanac for use in an office or study. By changing the backing sheet annually, this perpetual almanac allows one to calculate the days of the week, months and solar cycles, from 1600 to 1750, even allowing one to look backwards in time, from 1714, the date of publication, all the way to the year of 1600.

Accession number 2669.3.18





*Almanac for the Year 1718 (The Great Battle and Defeat of the Ottoman Army near Belgrade)*  
Published by François Landry (c. 1668-1720) and Gabrielle Landry (c. 1670-c. 1740), Paris  
Etching and engraving on paper

This brutal scene depicts the defeat of the Ottomans by the Imperial Austrian army led by commander Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736), in the Ottoman-Venetian War (1714-18). The text at the top describes the number of troops killed, canons, barrels of powder, bullets, grenades, chariots, horses and even flags taken from the defeated army.

The publishers François and Gabrielle Landry belonged to a great print publishing family. This brother and sister team published several almanacs together before Gabrielle married a bookseller and turned to publishing small bound pocketbook almanacs. There were often close family ties between Parisian publishers, engravers and other members of the book and print trade, working closely together, intermarrying and living side-by-side on the rue Saint Jacques and neighboring streets near the university.

Accession number 2669.4.21





*Almanac for the Year 1719 (Twenty-Four Year Truce between the Venetian Emperor and the Great Lord, Signed in Passarowitz)*

Published by François Landry (c. 1668-1720) and Gabrielle Landry (c. 1670-c. 1740), Paris  
Etching and engraving on paper

This depiction of peacemaking contrasts with the battle scene from the previous year's almanac displayed beside it. The Venetians and Ottomans are signing a 24-year truce, accompanied by mediating ambassadors from England and Holland. The figures at the bottom celebrate the peace with the sounds of a horn and drum. The tents are no longer scenes of battle and gore; they are now diplomatic spaces where peace is negotiated.

Accession number 2669.4.20



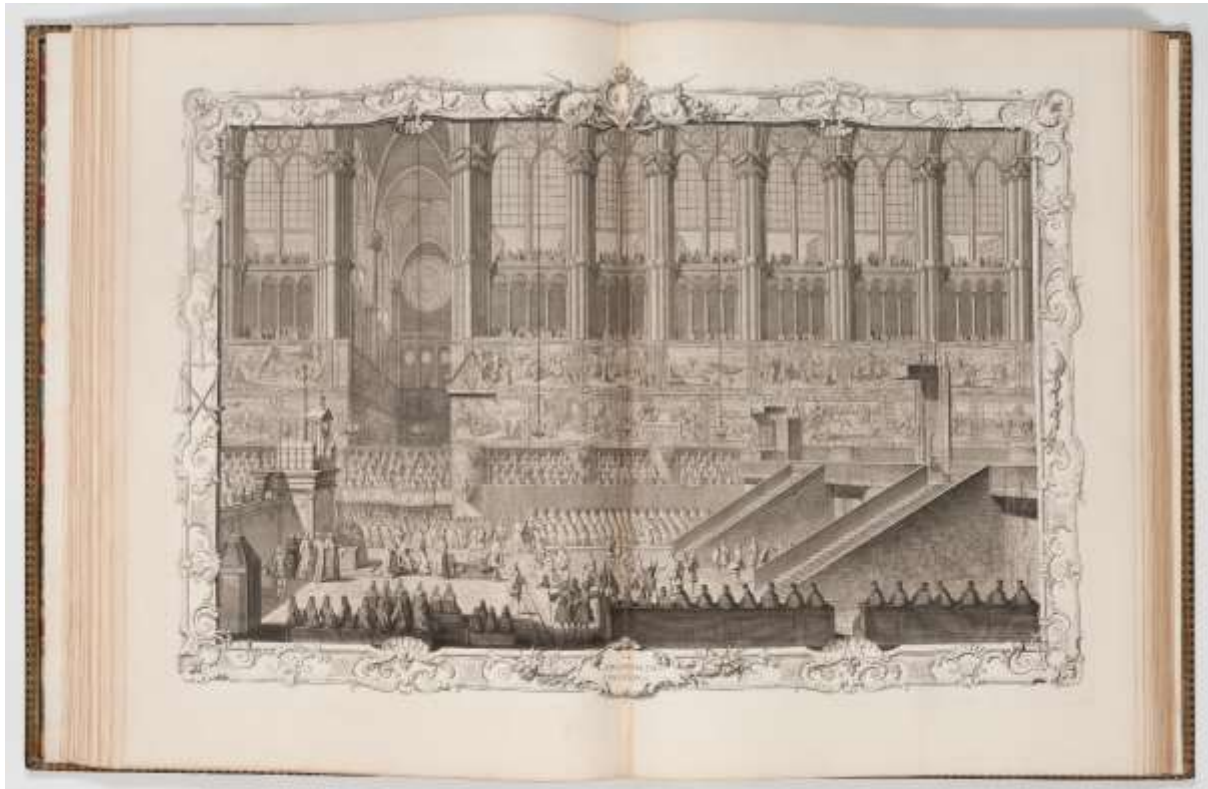
*Almanac for the Year 1723 (The August Ceremony of the Coronation of Louis XV of France and of Navarre)*

Published by François Gérard Jollain (1660-1735?), Paris  
Etching, engraving and letterpress on paper

The coronation of the twelve-year old king Louis XV was commemorated in hundreds of different prints, ranging from highly finished engravings to cheap and informative prints and pamphlets. Almanacs were produced very quickly and had to be ready for sale in December. Often only events

until October are depicted, giving publishers just two months to design and execute these large-scale prints.

In contrast to almanacs, some highly finished prints could take much longer to produce. The official coronation book, with its elegant engravings, took a startling nine years to complete.



The Anointment Ceremony in *Le Sacre de Louis XV, Roy de France & de Navarre, dans l'Eglise de Reims, Le Dimanche 25 Octobre, 1722*, Paris, 1731; designed by Pierre Dulin (1669-1748), engraved by Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Elder (1698-1754)

Accession number 2669.3.16





*Almanac for the Year 1734 (The August Portraits of the First Born Sons of our Kings)*

Published by François Gérard Jollain (1660-1735), Paris

Etching and engraving on paper

Minerva, goddess of wisdom, presents the young Louis, Dauphin of France (heir to the French throne) to his seated parents, Louis XV and Marie Leszczyńska. The figures gesture towards a family tree with medallion portraits of the previous royal heirs who bore the title of Dauphin, from the first, Humbert II (Dauphin from 1333 to 1349). The text along the bottom gives a detailed history of the first born sons. This type of educational almanac would have been perfectly suited for use in a schoolroom.

Accession number 2669.3.17





*Almanac for the Year 1753 (France is Thankful for the Dauphin's Healthy Recovery)*

Published by Pierre II Thévenard (active c.1735 –53), Paris

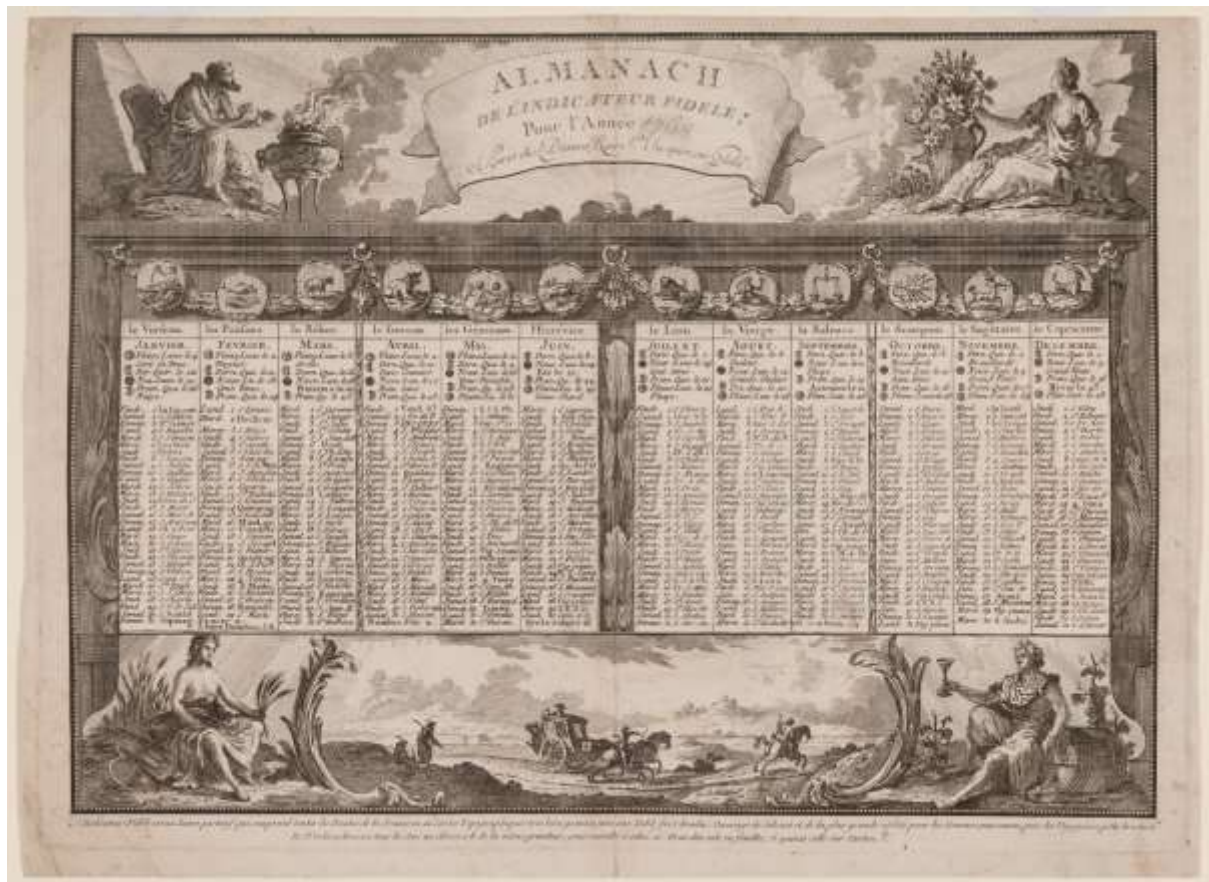
Etching, engraving, watercolour, graphite, ink and letterpress on paper

In 1752, Louis, the Dauphin (heir to the French throne) fell dangerously ill with smallpox. His recovery was celebrated in prints such as this almanac, in sermons, songs, poems, plays and operas.

This work is much simpler in composition and meaning than those produced during the reign of Louis XIV, with their complex layering of storytelling and allegory. Generally, almanacs declined in quality during this period and did not pick up again until the French Revolution.

At some stage in its history, the top section of this almanac was altered. At least two different prints of flying putti and clouds were cut up and pasted together, perhaps to replace damaged sections. The arms of the Dauphin and Dauphine were added in watercolour, graphite and ink.

Accession number 2669.3.19



*The Almanac of the Accurate Indicator for the Year 1768*

Designed and engraved by Le Charpentier (active c. 1768), text engraved by Desbruslins  *fils* (active c. 1768)

Published by Louis-Charles Desnos (1725-1805), Paris

Etching and engraving on paper

The almanac was produced to accompany the publication, *l'Indicateur Fidèle*, a travel book with detailed maps of France and neighboring countries, along with the schedules for transport, such as coaches and ferries.

The almanac was advertised at 10 sols or 15 sols mounted on board. This was an average price for almanacs of this quality, which could be sold cheaply due to their high print runs and popularity. In comparison, a new medium sized print of similar quality in the 1770s would cost about 3 livres. Inventories reveal that people who could afford to rent a room were usually able to furnish and decorate it with a few prints on the walls.

Accession number 2669.3.23



*Almanac for 30 Years, 1775*

Engraved and published by Lequin (active c. 1775)

Etching and engraving on paper

This elegant almanac dedicated to the new queen Marie Antoinette (1755-93) is known as a perpetual calendar because it could be used for several years. It would have worked by rotating a secondary sheet (now missing) and aligning the months, days and seasons with the chosen year. A small pin hole where the rotating device would have been fixed is still visible in the middle of the sun's face. This type of printing required extreme precision in order to line up the two sheets accurately.

Accession number 2669.3.26





After Jacques-Philippe de Beauvais (1739-81)

*Almanac for the Year 1771 (The August Alliance between the Houses of Bourbon and Austria)*

Published by Laurent-Pierre Lachaussé (d. 1782), Paris

Etching, engraving, watercolour and letterpress on paper

This almanac celebrates the marriage of Louis-Auguste, Dauphin of France (the future Louis XVI) and the archduchess Marie Antoinette of Austria. The event forged a new alliance between countries that had long been enemies.

Profile portraits of the royal couple flank a central scene showing Minerva overseeing the inscription of the event into the book of History. The two winged figures are Hymen, god of Marriage, and Cupid, representing Love. The central scene and the explanation along the bottom were copied from a more refined print (displayed beside it) produced in anticipation of the wedding.

Modern copyright laws did not yet exist, although some protection was offered through expensive royal privileges. It was much easier and more cost effective for a print publisher to copy an existing image rather than to pay an artist for a new one.

Accession number 2669.3.24





Jacques-Philippe de Beauvais, engraved by Pierre-Laurent Auvray (1736-81)  
*Allegory for the Alliance of Monseigneur the Dauphin with the Archduchess Marie-Antoinette,  
 Celebrated at Versailles on May 16, 1770, 1770 [nd]*  
 Published by les Demoiselles Beauvais (active c 1770)  
 Engraving and etching on paper  
 Accession number 3219

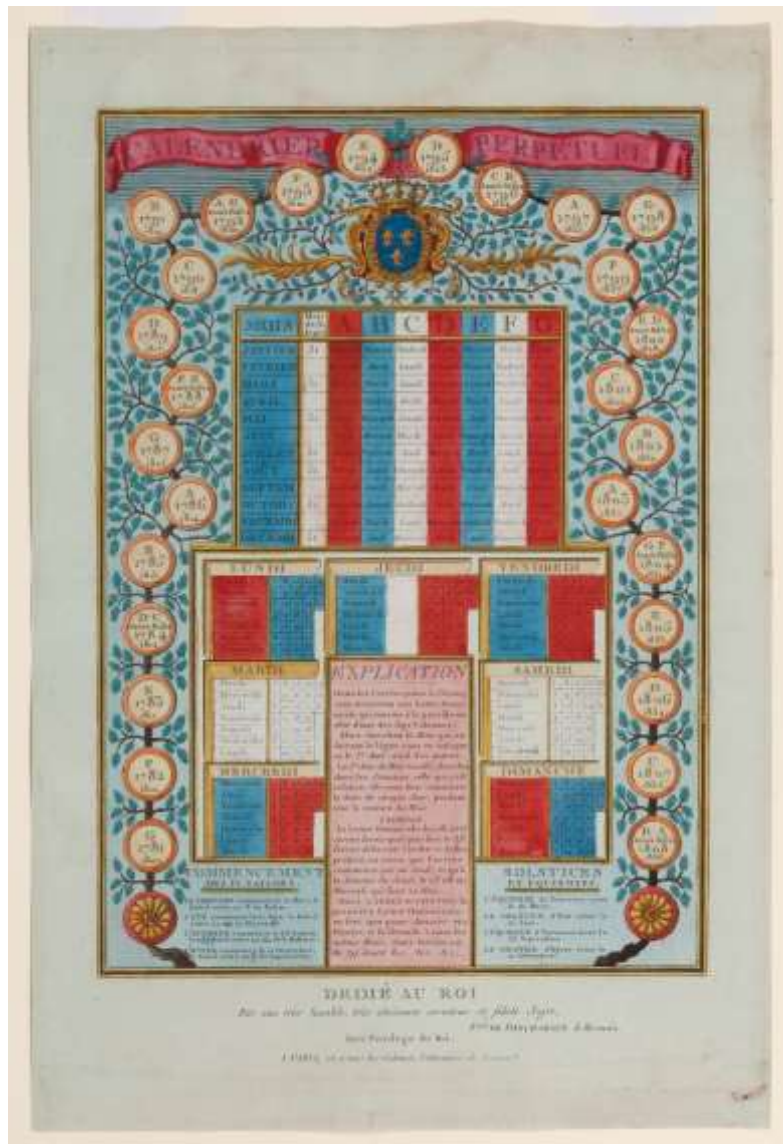


*Almanac for the Year 1780 (Conquest of the Island of Grenada from the English)*  
Etching, engraving, watercolour and letterpress on paper

The central scene celebrates a French naval victory - the capture of the island of Grenada from the English during the Anglo-French War of 1778-83 and the American Revolutionary War.

This almanac is enriched with a combination of colour printing and hand-colouring. Usually prints were coloured before they were sold, either by the publishers and print sellers or at the customers' request. A coloured print would have generally cost twice as much as an uncoloured one. Sometimes colour was used to hide damaged lines caused by wear to the copper plate. Hand-colouring was a specialised trade, dominated by women. It was not until the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that colour intaglio printing became commercially significant and more widespread.

Accession number 2669.3.29



F. de Poncharaux le Romain (active c 1781)

*Perpetual Calendar*, 1781

Possibly published by Pierre-Michel Lamy (active c1769-c1809), Paris  
 Etching, engraving and watercolour on paper

This clear and elegant perpetual calendar for the years 1781 to 1836, dedicated to the king, was described in an advertisement as being ‘very useful, and can be placed in any office or study, and by its clarity and form, deserves to be preferred to all others...’

It works by choosing a year within the circles and then matching the corresponding letter to a month within the central table, which gives the first day of the week for that month. Perpetual calendars date from at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century and are still made today.

Accession number 2669.3.30





*Almanac for the Year 1789 (Almanac for the Present Year 1789)*

Published by Paul André Basset (active 1785-1815), Paris

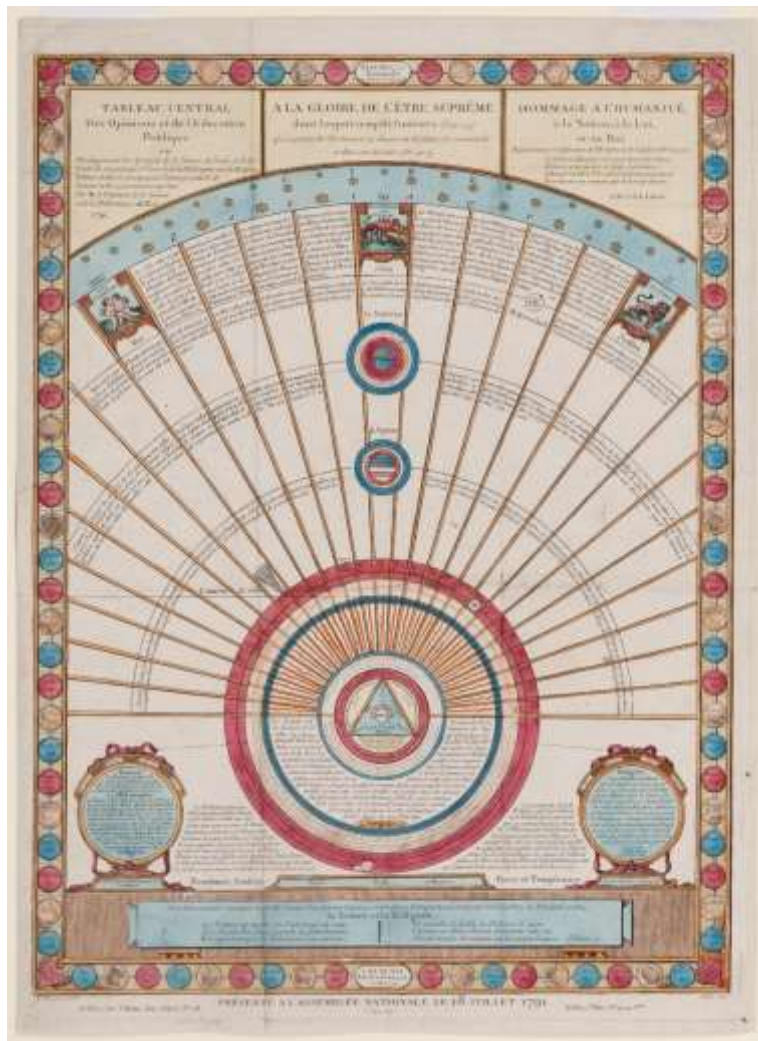
Etching and engraving on paper

This almanac was published on the brink of the French Revolution, made evident by a somewhat defeated-looking Louis XVI, seated on his throne.

The roundel in the bottom left hand corner depicts Jacques Necker (1732-1804), the Finance Minister, holding a limp and un-plentiful cornucopia. This may have been intended as a satirical comment on France's financial ruin. After France was declared bankrupt on 16 August 1789, Louis XVI made a final attempt to fix the situation by reinstating Necker as Finance Minister, after having dismissed him in 1781.

Accession number 2669.3.36





*Central Chart of Opinions and Public Education, 1791*

Designed by Jean Chevret (1747-1820), engraved by Jean Baptiste Marie Poisson (active c. 1791),  
text engraved by Charles Picquet (1771-1827)

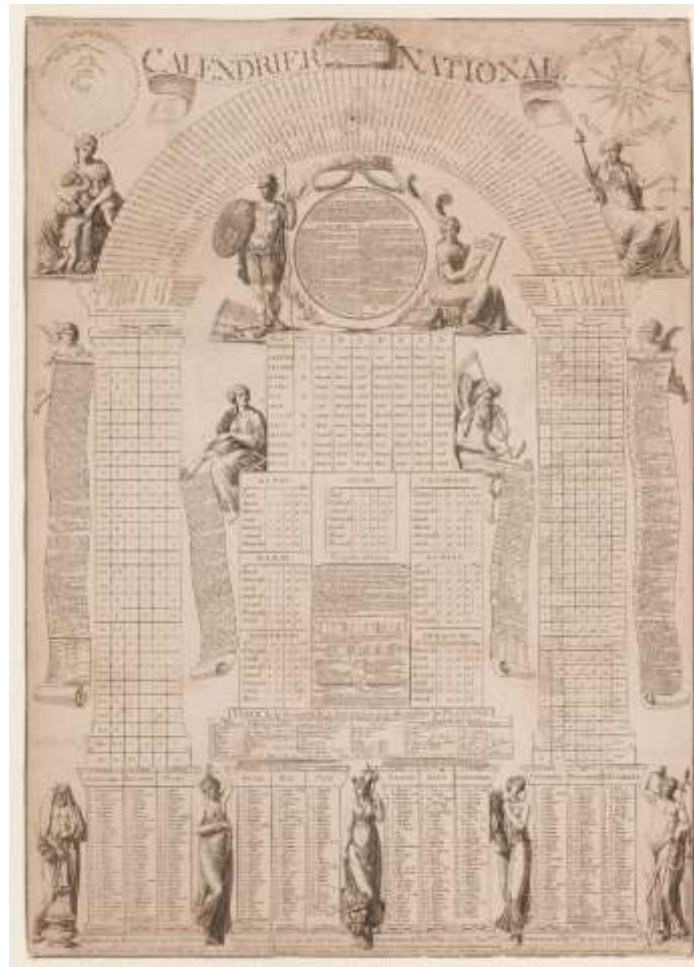
Published by the Chevret brothers, Paris

Etching, engraving, watercolour on paper

This striking print is not in fact an almanac although it was stored with the other almanacs at Waddesdon. It is a visual representation of a new Deist (belief in God based on reason) religious system proposed by the librarian and writer Jean Chevret and intended to replace that of the Catholic Church.

In the print, quotations from the New Testament coexist with astronomical calculations and the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers such as Isaac Newton (1642-1727), René Descartes (1596-1650), and Voltaire (1694-1778). God as creator and supreme ruler is celebrated alongside the principle of the Liberty of Man. The sun embodies divine spirit, stripped of its previous royal associations. There is no more Sun King here, but rather a sun god.

Accession number 2669.3.37



*National Calendar, Calculated for 30 Years, 1792*

Text engraved by M. P. Vallet (active c 1792)

Published by J.F.Lefevre (active c. 1792) and the widow of Claude-Antoine Lesclapart (1747?-1794), Paris

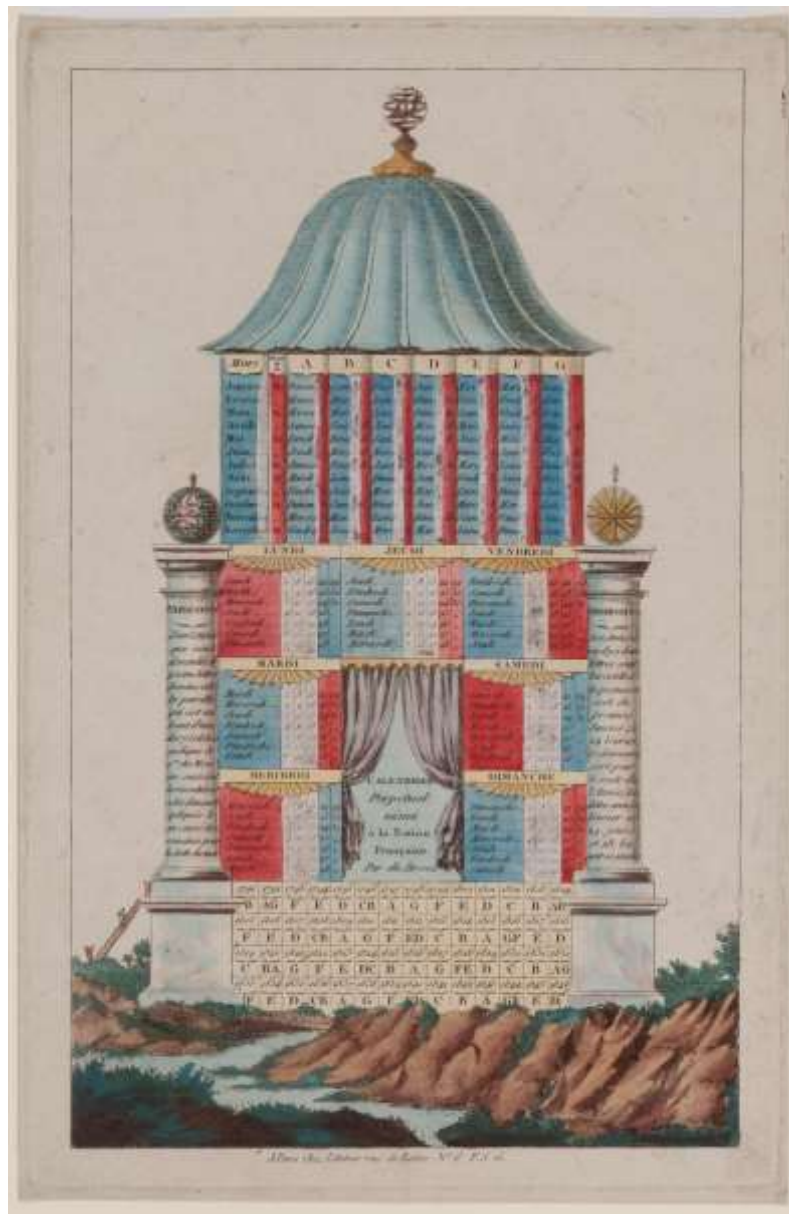
Etching and engraving on paper

This perpetual calendar, calculated for 30 years, is much more than a simple calendar. The miniscule text has been painstakingly engraved and is surely aimed to impress rather than to inform. Unlike most other almanacs, the name of the specialised text engraver is printed on the sheet.

The calendar includes everything one needs to know to understand time, astrology, history and contemporary events. The Declaration of the Rights of Man from 1789 takes up the central medallion while the scrolls and columns describe the major events from the Revolution, a description of France under the Old Regime, a world chronology from the Creation to the Revolution, a chart of the French regions and two verses from the revolutionary song, the *Marseillaise*, which later became the French national anthem.

Despite its intended lifespan, this calendar was made redundant the following year by the introduction of the new Republican Calendar.

Accession number 2669.3.39



Du Brena (active 1791)  
*Perpetual Calendar Dedicated to the Nation, 1791*  
 Published by Du Brena, Paris  
 Etching, engraving, watercolour on paper

This perpetual calendar framed by a classical temple, stands as a monument to Time itself. The tiny figures in the bottom left-hand corner, climbing up to the temple, emphasise the monumentality of time. The building and figures imply the certainty of time and astronomy, yet this order would be completely undermined and re-invented by the introduction of the Republican Calendar only a couple of years later.

Accession number 2669.3.38





*Almanac for the Year 1793*  
 Aquatint and etching on paper

The portrait of the revolutionary martyr Jean-Paul Marat (1743-93) features prominently above the calendar for 1793. Marat was a physician, political theorist, and scientist - an important and popular leader during the Revolution - who advocated the abolition of the monarchy. On 13 July 1793, Charlotte Corday (1768-93), a member of an opposing conservative faction, assassinated Marat in his bath. Countless prints of Marat and of the event were published, turning him into a cult figure. Interestingly, this calendar only shows the months from July to December, suggesting that it may have been produced soon after his death and could therefore only have been used for half the year.

Accession number 2669.3.41



## The Republican Calendar

The French Revolution of 1789 was a seismic shift in the course of history and in many ways marks the beginning of our modern age. Fueled by Enlightenment ideas and financial and political crises, the Revolution dismantled the Old Regime. The king was beheaded, along with thousands of others, and new social, political and economic systems were created, based on the principals of reason and the Freedom of Man.

Time itself was reinvented with the creation of a new Republican calendar, introduced in 1793 to replace the Gregorian calendar. The year France became a Republic – 1792 – was retrospectively named Year I. The new calendar represented the abolition of the ‘era of slavery’ and of ‘superstition’, by the removal of all religious and royalist associations. It looked to the natural world for inspiration. Instead of honouring saints, each day was named after an element of agricultural life, such as the day of the chicory on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of *frimaire* (November). The year was made up of 12 months, each divided into three 10-day ‘decades’, with the remaining 5 days gathered at the end of the year into a series of festivals. The 10-day week harmonised with the decimal system used for other measurements. The year began in September with the autumnal equinox, coinciding with the anniversary of the declaration of the French Republic. The poet and playwright Fabre d’Églantine (1750-94) renamed the days and months based on the natural world and country life, in a way that evoked the seasons and the weather (as they were experienced in Paris). For example, October / November became *brumaire*, the month of mist, while August/September was *fructidor*, the month of the fruit.

Printed almanacs were essential to ensure that the French people accepted the new Republican calendar. However, its introduction was problematic, especially for business and foreign trade. It did not survive for long. The Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) reinstated the old Gregorian calendar in 1805 (Year XIV), although the Republican calendar was briefly brought back for 18 days in 1871 by the Paris Commune.

‘Our time has opened a new book of history and its forward movement as majestic and simple as equality, it must engrave with its new and vigorous burin the annals of a regenerated France.... We have sought out what was most suitable for the farmer, whose calendar ought to be as simple as the nature from which he is never separated.’ (Charles Gilbert Romme (1750-95))



Philibert Louis Debucourt (1755-1832)  
*Republican Calendar*, 1794  
Published by Philibert Louis Debucourt, Paris  
Etching and aquatint on paper

Debucourt originally published this highly finished calendar as a pair to another print, *The French Republic with the Declaration of the Rights of Man*, illustrated below. The pairing of prints had become fashionable during this period. In 1791, a French dictionary stated that 'today people almost only buy prints as furnishings and no engraver can be sure of a successful sale of a plate if he does not accompany it with a pair.'

The figure of Philosophy is seated on a marble throne, recording the principles of the new calendar in the book of Nature. The text along the bottom describes the objects at her feet - including books and prints and the Gregorian calendar - as 'the gothic monuments of error and superstition on which the ignorant and ridiculous division of time was founded.'

Accession number 2669.3.42



Philibert Louis Debucourt (1755-1832), *The French Republic with the Declaration of the Rights of Man*, 1793; etching and aquatint. Bibliothèque nationale de France.



*Decadal for the Year III of the French Republic, 1795*  
 Etching, engraving and watercolour on paper

The title *Decadal* refers to the new 10-day week, called *decade*, in which each month was divided. Despite the revolutionary language used in this Republican calendar for Year III, the style of illustrations recalls imagery often found in pre-Revolution pocketbook almanacs. Some of the images are copied from famous paintings, such as Fragonard's *The Pledge of Love*. These 'galant' scenes often match the seasons - youthful flirtations illustrate spring and summer months while marital and familial love or 'true love' accompany winter.

Accession numbers 2669.3.44 and 2669.3.43





Marcellus Laroon, the elder (1653-1702)

*The Cryes of the city of London drawne after the life*, London, 1689?

Published and engraved by Pierce Tempest (1653-1717)

Engraving and etching on paper

Almanacs and other prints were not only purchased from publishers or booksellers. Less expensive prints were available from street sellers (such as the one on display), of the type first portrayed in English art around 1600. This volume was the most sophisticated and influential collection of depictions of these sellers, named after their cries used as they hawked their wares in the noisy bustle of towns and cities.

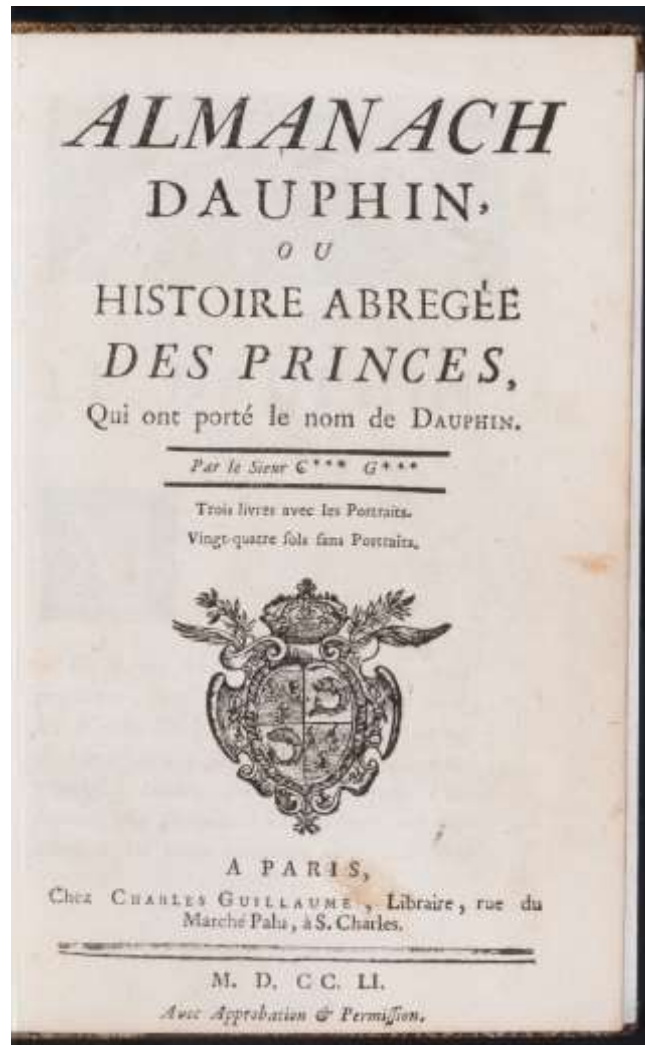
Accession number 379



Jean-Baptiste-Marie Poisson (active late 18th century)  
*Cris de Paris dessinés d'après nature par m. Poisson*, [1775]  
Published by Jean-Baptiste Marie Poisson, Paris  
Engraving and watercolour on paper

This street seller is holding up a pocket-sized almanac. He also sells almanacs to be mounted or hung on walls. The *Almanach de liege*, mentioned in the street sellers' cry, in the text below, was a very popular annual publication. It provided practical, medical and household advice based on the influence of the stars, along with stories and anecdotes about current affairs. They were sold for 2 sols, which would have been affordable to many.

Accession number 5517



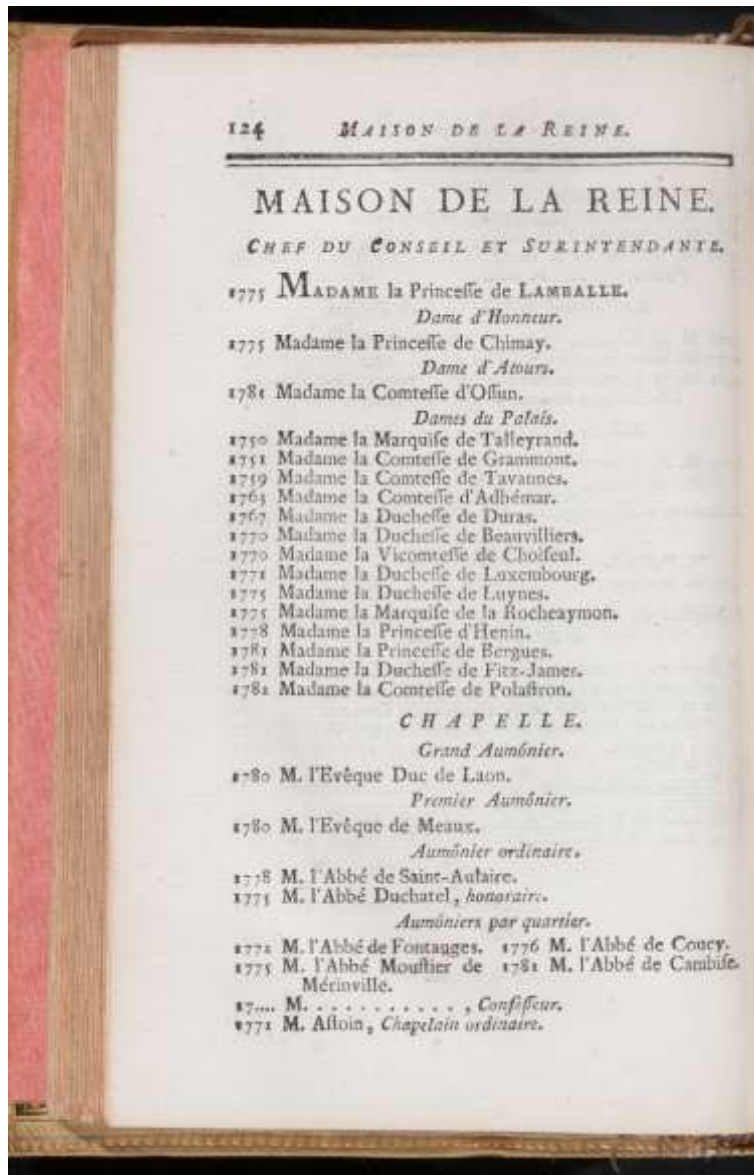
*Almanach Dauphin, ou Histoire abrégée des princes, qui ont porté le nom de Dauphin*, Paris, 1751

Published by Charles Guillaume (active c. 1751), engraved by E.-J. Desrochers (1668-1741) and Vincent Le Sueur (1668-1743)

This almanac dedicated to the Dauphin (heir to the French throne) provides an illustrated history of previous Dauphins, with 24 engraved portraits and explanatory text. This educational subject and approach is similar to the wall almanac of 1734 also on display in this room.

The preface gives a short history of the Roman, Julian and Gregorian calendars. A distinction is made between the word 'calendar' and 'almanac'. The word '*calendes*', with its Latin origin, is defined as the first day of every month, while the word '*calendriers*' (calendar) is a grouping of months. The word '*almanach*' is described as a 'barbarous' word, of Arabic origin, referring instead to numbers and calculations. The two words are used interchangeably throughout this period in describing both wall calendars and bound pocketbook almanacs. It was not until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that a real distinction was made

Accession number 4587



*Almanach royal, année M.DCC.LXXXIII*, Paris, 1782  
 Published by Laurent d'Houry (1644-1725)

The *Almanach royal* was a kind of annual directory for the French bureaucracy, listing each of the royal households, members of the various academies, lists of doctors, military figures, schedules for coaches, ferries and the postal service. It was an essential tool for any professional or member of the court. The pages displayed here list the names of those working for the queen Marie Antoinette, known as her household.

In 1683, the printer and bookseller Laurent d'Houry first published his *Almanach ou calendrier*. It was presented to Louis XIV in 1699 and became the *Almanach royale*, the official court almanac, which continued to be published annually until 1919 with various name changes along the way.

Accession number 4642





*Étrennes Mignonnes, curieuses et utiles*, Paris, 1772

Published by Claude-Jacques-Charles & Pierre-François Durand (active c 1760-c 72)

On loan from a Rothschild Family Trust

This almanac combines the practical and the anecdotal with a listing of all of the monarchs in Europe, government officials, maps of France and Paris and summaries of recent major events. The section 'Natural Curiosities' includes interesting anecdotes, such as a 45 year old woman from Nottingham who gave birth to her 30<sup>th</sup> child.

The painted scenes and central roundel are protected by transparent sheets made from mica, a silicate mineral that can easily be split into thin sheets.

This type of decoration was commonly used on bindings for small format almanacs from the 1750s onwards. They were eye-catching but easy to produce, perfect for a fast growing and competitive market.

Accession number 8.2017



Gravelot (1699-1773)

*Almanach iconologique pour l'année 1767, première partie, Des vertus orné de Figures avec leurs explications par m. [Hubert-François] Gravelot.* Paris, 1766. Published by Lattré (active c 1766)

This almanac was intended as a type of iconographical reference book by the artist and engraver Gravelot (1699-1773), continued after his death by Charles-Nicolas Cochin, the Younger (1715-90) and finally completed by Charles-Etienne Gaucher (1741-1804). It is the third of a series running from 1765 to 1781. The 12-page calendar is illustrated with personifications of the Virtues such as Truth, Reason, Strength and Charity. The calendar itself, as is the case in all of these pocketbook almanacs, is completely secondary to the main subject of the book.

Accession number 4610

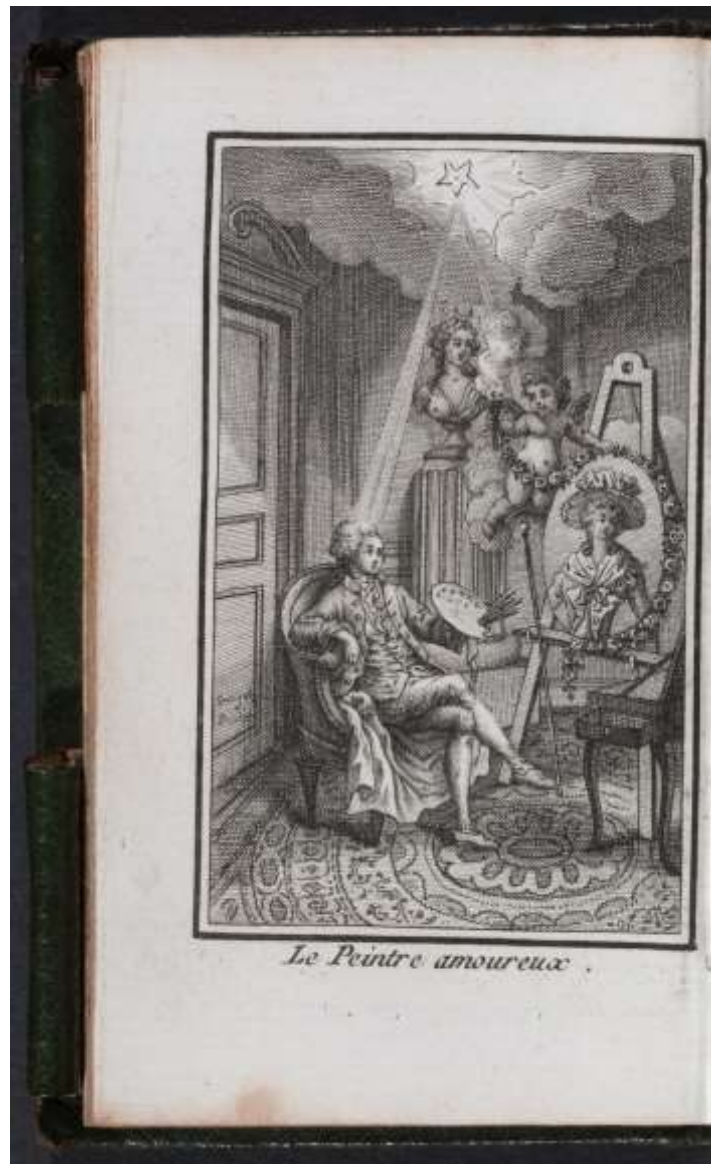


*Etrennes galantes, ou tableau de l'hymen et de l'amour* [bound with] *Etrennes galantes ou l'instant heureux de cythère dédié aux deux sexes* [bound with] *Le secrétaire des dames et des messieurs, ou Dépositaire fidèle & discret, et à double usage*, Paris, 1790  
Published by Louis-Charles Desnos (1725-1805)

This volume is made up of a calendar, songs, stories, engravings, and a notebook with erasable paper – a useful pocketbook for all occasions, not dissimilar to our modern-day Smartphones.

The publisher Desnos' title of 'geographer to the king of Denmark' has been crossed out on the title page, which was almost certainly done during the Revolution. This is the only evidence of the upheaval which is otherwise absent from a volume mainly concerned with youthful flirtation and love.

Accession number 4618

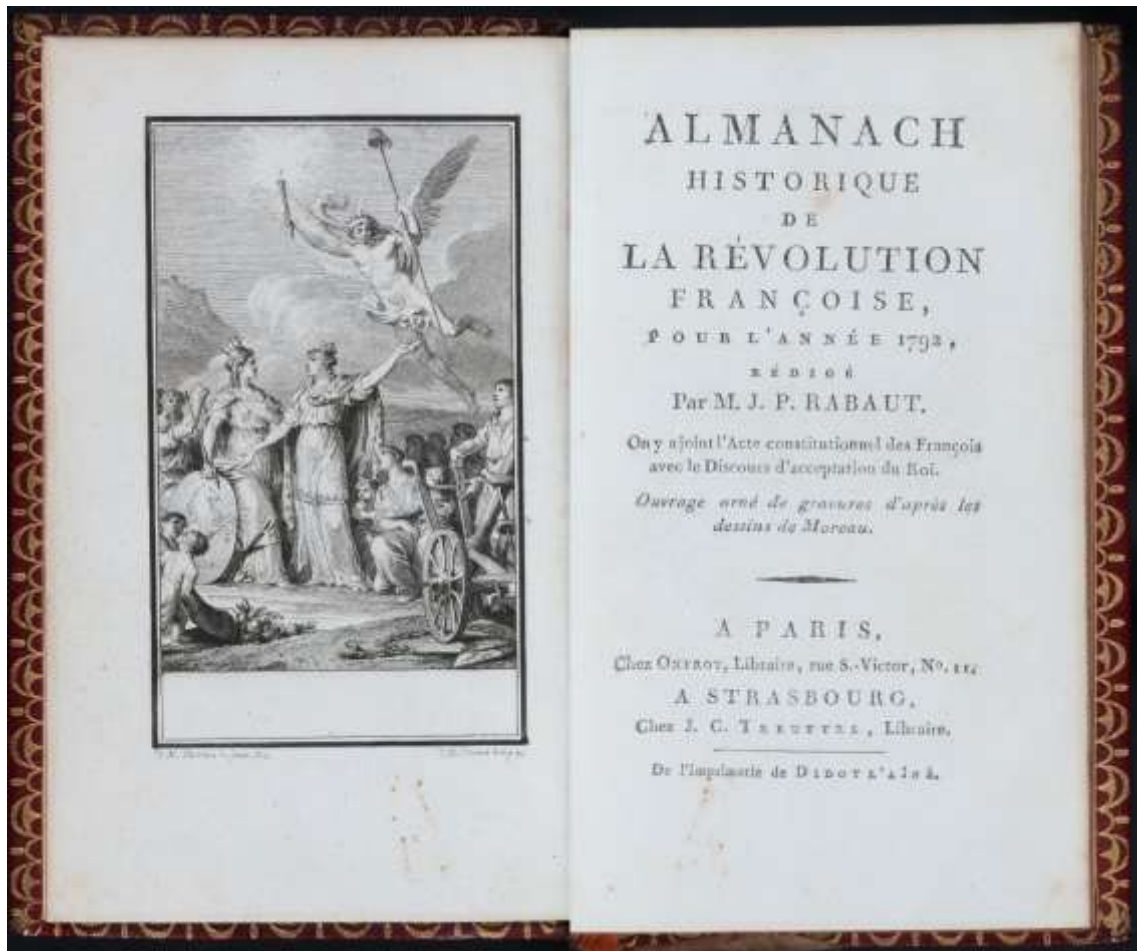


*Les colifichets Lirico-galants ou la folie amoureuse d'un peintre* [Bound with] 24 engraved, numbered pages of music and songs [Bound with] *Le nécessaire des dames et des Messieurs, ou Dépositaire fidèle* [Bound with] [A Calendar for the year 1790], Paris, 1790  
Plates engraved by Dorgez (active 1780-1814), published by Jean-Pierre Jubert (active c. 1790)

This volume contains different elements, including an almanac for 1790 with a calendar, engravings on the theme of the love of a painter, 24 pages of music and song, and erasable paper to be used as a notebook. The notebook was copied from the one published by Desnos, in his *Etrennes Galantes* of the same year, also displayed here. It is described as both useful for men and women and for 'business men, travelers, military...where one can note down discretely one's gains and losses, appointments, ideas, poems, conversations, addresses etc.'.

Accession number 4616





Jean-Paul Rabaut (1743-93)

*Almanach historique de la révolution française* [Bound with] *Réflexions politiques sur les circonstances présentes*, par J.-P. Rabaut [Bound with] *La constitution française, décrétée par l'Assemblée nationale constituante, aux années 1789, 1790, 1791 : acceptée par le roi le 14 septembre 1791*, Paris, Strasbourg, 1792

Frontispiece by Jean Michel Moreau (1741-1814), engraved by Jean Baptiste Blaise Simonet (1742-1813)

Published by E. Onfroy (d.1809), J.-C Treuttel (active c. 1792)

The *Almanach de la révolution* is a printed history, a guide to the Revolution as it was happening, with all major events described and some even elegantly illustrated. It includes Louis XVI's speech in the National Assembly, bound with political reflections, and the new constitution.

The almanac was written by Rabaut, a protestant pastor from Nîmes, who played a significant role in the Revolution and successfully pleaded for religious freedoms for non-Catholics. He also wrote an influential political primer for the peasantry. His political views fell out of favour with the government and he was executed after the carpenter who built his hideout betrayed him. He is one of the three representative priests in Jacques-Louis David's unfinished painting *The Tennis Court Oath* (1790-94).

Accession number 4696



Twelve uncut plates probably for the *Almanach Dauphin*, also known as the *Almanach de la Naissance de Monseigneur le Dauphin*, 1782  
 Possibly published by Boulanger (active c 1782)  
 Etching on paper

This sheet of twelve scenes relate to the birth of the Dauphin, son and heir to Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in 1781 and was probably intended to be cut up and bound into an almanac for the year of 1782.

Engraved images and text from moveable type required different types of printing presses, so they were produced separately. Once printed, the illustrations were inserted into the text pages, following instructions which were often printed at the back of the text itself. The pages were then sewn together by a 'brocheuse', a job often done by women. The sewn volume was then ready for sale or for binding.

Accession number 2669.3.31